

## Part 2. Kinkozan Sobei Shoten - An Awata Kiln.



Source: Sozan For the Kinkozan Studio

A massive Satsuma trumpet vase Meiji era (1868-1912), late 19th century.

Cylindrical with a flared mouth and finely painted in colored enamels and gilt with rectangular panels containing a winter landscape with geese in flight and standing by a lake shore, and a scene of the final meeting between Kusunoki Masashige and his son Masatsura before campaign curtains bearing the family crest, the borders painted with key frets and the rim and foot with a band of formal lozenges with abbreviated versions of the Kusunoki family crest, the interior of the rim with a cloud band containing flowering vines, the surrounding areas painted with maple leaves, chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms in two shades of gilt and red and green enamels on a cobalt ground, signed at the bottom left of each panel *Sozan* in red enamel in an oval reserve and on the underside in an elaborate rectangular key-fret reserve *Kinkozan sei* and with impressed signature *Kinkozan tsukuru*. 15 3/8in (39cm) high. Exhibited: Columbia Museum of Art, "Meiji Magic, Imperial Porcelain from Japan from the Collection of Alex and Barbara Kasten", 3 January- 18 May 2014



Source: Jeff Olson, Specialist Japanese Art, Bonhams Auction House, New York. 15 March 2017. 16



## A PAIR OF SLENDER OVOID SATSUMA VASES

By Shozan, Meiji era (1868-1912), late 19th/early 20th century

Each vase decorated in enamels and gilt with a complementary scene depicting an elegant bridal procession, the bride wearing a *tsunokakushi* headdress accompanied by several attendants, all strolling beneath overhanging branches of cherry blossoms, the children playing with a dog, the shoulder with overlapping swirling brocade enclosing assorted geometric and floral designs; each vase signed on the base with a gilt seal *Shozan*. Each vase 24.5cm (9 5/8in) high. (2).

Source: Suzannah Yip, Specialist – Japanese Art. Bonhams Auction House, London. 8 Nov 2018



These, and the following, are examples of the very highest standard of design and workmanship achieved by the leading Kyoto ceramic factories at the apogee of the so-called "Satsuma" style. Kinkozan Sobei VII (1868-1928), son of Sobei VI (d.1884) and the owner of the Kinkozan factory during that glorious period, is thought to have exhibited first at the 1888 Barcelona International Exhibition, and subsequently at the Paris (1889), Chicago (1893), Paris (1900), and St. Louis (1904) Expositions and the Japan-British Exhibition held in London in 1910, as well as at several Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai (Domestic Industrial Exhibitions) in Japan.

Although the factory's most elaborate and intricate wares fell out of favor with exhibition jurors from around 1900, they continued to appeal powerfully to the prevailing European and American taste for the exotic and fantastic. This was a time when discerning collectors of Japanese arts and crafts were growing increasingly aware of earlier Japanese, art, lore, and legend. In response, Kinkozan's complex figural designs often captivatingly evoked Japan's glorious past through depictions of the world of Prince Genji, the eleventh-century romantic hero (lot 2208), or convincing evocations of medieval ink painting (lot 2207). For an example of a Kinkozan vase combining openwork with figural scenes in the Khalili Collection, see Oliver Impey et al., *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, vol.5, *Ceramics*, part II: Earthenware, London, Kibo Foundation, 1995, no.167.

**Source: Jeff Olson, Specialist Japanese Art, Bonhams Auction House, New York. 21 March 2018.**

#### A TALL OVOID SATSUMA VASE

By Kinkozan, Meiji era (1868-1912)

Finely decorated in enamels and gilt with two large rectangular cream panels enclosing two contrasting scenes, one depicting a cockerel and hen foraging for food besides flowering shrubs of chrysanthemums, rose mallow, peonies and morning glories growing beside a stream, the other panel with a bustling outdoor scene in Edo, depicting travellers, traders, itinerant entertainers, porters carrying boxes and other passers-by crossing over a bridge and going about their daily business, two large teahouses on the left foreground and ferry boats and mountains in the distance, separated by stylised bamboo, pine, plum and other auspicious motifs reserved on a blue ground, the foot with

a wide continuous band of maple leaves floating on tumultuous waters; signed on the base with gilt seal *Kinkozan zo* with impressed mark *Kinkozan zo*. 44.5cm (17½in) high.



Source: Suzannah Yip, Specialist – Japanese Art. Bonhams Auction House, London. 12 May 2016

## Mitsutoshi 光年 for the Kinkozan Company

### A PEAR-SHAPED SATSUMA VASE

Painted by Mitsutoshi for the Kinkozan Company, Meiji era (1868-1912)

Decorated in enamels and gilt, the body decorated with two large rectangular panels, each enclosing a contrasting scene, one depicting a family of chickens foraging for food among tall stems of bamboo and flowering shrubs of chrysanthemum and *fuyo* (rose mallow) growing beside a stream, the other showing throngs of revellers enjoying the *hanami* (cherry-blossom-viewing) season, including drunken men, priests, entertainers and families gathered inside and approaching an imposing tea-house nestled beneath the branches of large flowering cherry trees, all reserved on a blue ground decorated with stylised chrysanthemum heads strewn over a stream, the neck applied with two handles in the form of elephant heads; signed on the base within two overlapping *shikishi* (square-shaped poem-cards) *Dai Nippon Kyoto Awata Kinkozan zo* (made by Kinkozan in Awata, Kyoto, Great Japan) and *Mitsutoshi ga* (painted by Mitsutoshi). 15.5cm (6 1/8in) high.



大日本京  
都栗田  
錦光山造  
光年画

Dai Nippon, Kyoto Awata, Kinkozan zo, Mitsutoshi ga





Source: Suzannah Yip, Specialist – Japanese Art. Bonhams Auction House, London. 12 May 2016

## JAPANESE SATSUMA VASE



日本京  
錦光山  
造

Source: Jeff Olson, Specialist Japanese Art, Bonhams Auction House, New York. 19 March 2014



## Kinkozan Sobei VI and VII – An Overview

*“Kinkozan Sobei VI and VII headed one of the largest ceramics factories in Kyoto. It manufactured everything from the crudest and cheapest wares to the most exclusive and expensive. The factory’s leading painters signed their pieces with their names”:*



Fuzan,



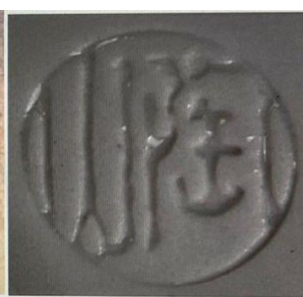
Ichiko,



Chikuzai,



Itozan,



and Sozan”.

*"The last of these, whose red seal appears inside a cartouche, was among the finest painters of his kind in Japan."* Gisela Jahn. **Meiji Ceramics. The Art of Japanese Export Porcelain and Satsuma Ware 1868-1912. Arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart. 2004. Pg. 163.** Note: The first mark is the Kinkozan factory mark with Sozan's mark. The second mark is Sozan's as it is frequently included to identify the artist within painted panels. Sozan produced very high-quality artwork and his mark can be found in combination with Kinkozan mark, the Yasuda company mark and individually.

*"The leading Awata workshops – among them Wake Kitei, Taizan Yohei, Tanzan Seikai and Rokuro, Kinkozan Sobei and Yasuda Kyoto Tojiki Goshikaisha – embraced the latest trends, and designs of theirs published in the Onchizuroku thus resembled those produced elsewhere".* The finest painters *"cultivated personal styles, as did Sozan at Kinkozan, Ryozan at Yasuda, Meizan, Kozan and Seikozan, all of whom either maintained their own workshop or worked to commission"*. **Ibid. Pg. 154.**



Rare Satsuma condiment set of three lidded bowls and twisted rope handle. Each cover has its individual design in raised moriage enamel. The three bowls are attached and each has a scene of a boy and an elder on one side and young boy scenes on the other, all done in raised enamel. The side panels are painted with finely painted enamel with a three-dimensional jewel quality. Signed by decorator Meizan with Seikozan's pottery mark impressed in the cover. *William & Jo-Ann Van Rooy. \$8000-10,000.*



What better illustration than the above. The mark for Chikuzai and the Meizan/Seikozan collaboration came from: **Schiffer, Nancy C. Shape & Decoration in Japanese Export Ceramics. Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, PA 19310. USA. 2002 Pgs. 230 and 124 respectively.**

*“The foundation of associations like the Yutoen”*, in which leaders like Kinkozan Sobei VII, Suwa Sozan, the Yoga painter Asai Chu (1856-1907), Miyagawa Kozan and Sino-Japanese style ceramist Seifu Yohei III (1851-1914), to name but a few, played dominant parts, were instrumental in bringing together a holistic approach to the production of ceramics.

Additionally, *“the publication of design periodicals that kept readers informed of trends at home and abroad”* was fundamental in bringing together all the participants essential for the revitalization of the Japanese ceramic and porcelain industry. **Jahn. Pg. 123.** In addition to the five “leading painters” listed above, I have added Shozan and Mitsutoshi in the illustrations above. You will note the relevance and interplay of many of these individuals as we go through the other sections.



**Source: Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives Collection.** View of Kinkozan Factory in Miyako no Sakigake. 1883



In the interim, following is a very brief introduction to an early affiliation in San Francisco that begs additional research.

### **Kinkozan Shoten and S & G Gump Company, San Francisco, CA**

S & G Gump was founded in 1861 as a mirror and frame shop by Solomon Gump and his brother, Gustav. It later sold moldings, gilded cornices, and European artwork to those recently made wealthy from the California Gold Rush. The business flourished; the store sold products ranging from jewelry made from jade, precious gemstones, and cultured freshwater pearls to products from luxury designers such as Hermès and Buccellati. The 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed the store and all of the merchandise, but A.L. Gump reopened the store and, fueled by his passion for Oriental art, began selling his exotic collectibles from the Far East. He sent his buyers to Japan and China, bringing back exotic rugs, porcelains, silks, bronzes and jades to California's new millionaires.

**Source: Wikipedia**

#### **A SATSUMA VASE**

By the Kinkozan Studio, Taisho/early Showa era

The ovoid body finely painted in polychrome enamels and gilt on a clear crackle glaze with a continuous daimyo procession with the scale of the figures diminishing in size towards the top, a gilt-and-red *shippo-tsunagi* band at the waisted neck and encircling the foot, the recessed base signed in gilt *Kinkozan-zo* below a *S & G Gump Company* fan-shaped mark.





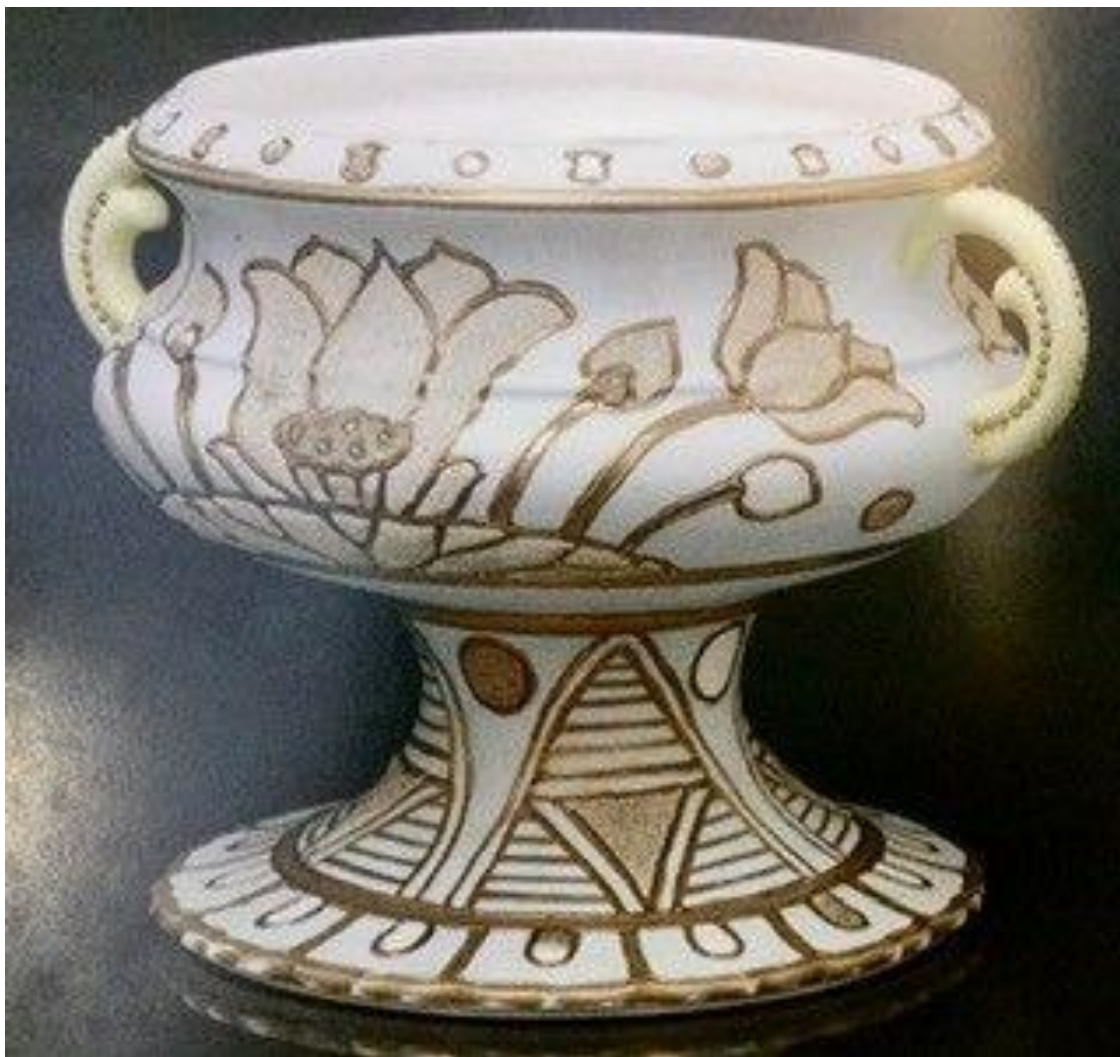
Source: Suzannah Yip, Specialist – Japanese Art. Bonhams Auction House, London.

## Kinkozan Porcelains and Marks Over Time

The following examples of porcelains are presented as representative items to coincide with the marking process. In the case of Kinkozan, we are fortunate to have the details of the marking protocols and production details and target markets evolved.

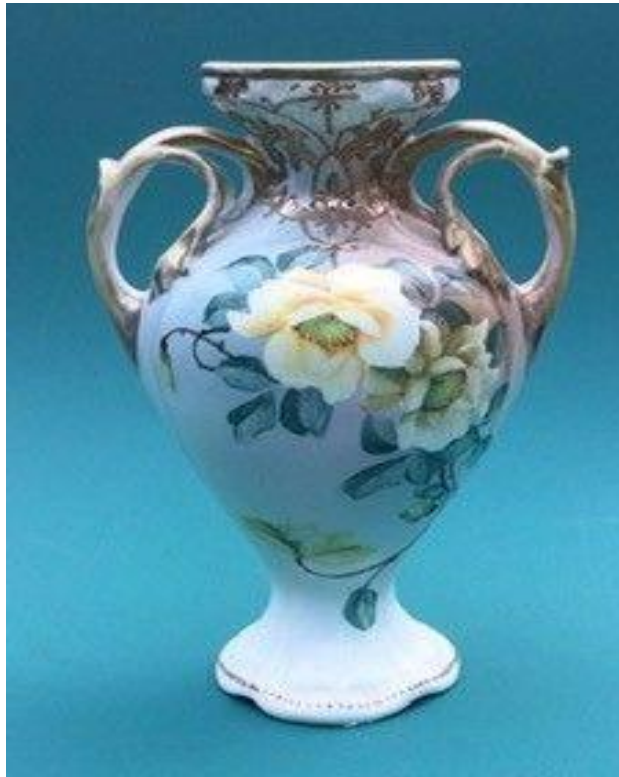
I have started with a coralene item as this line was relatively short-lived. *“The name “Coralene” was created referring to the resemblance to coral of this type of porcelain’s beaded surface. Coralene wares were produced for about 10 years in Japan starting in 1910 and the American firm A.A. Vantine applied for patents on the technique in both Japan and the United States in 1907 and 1908. While many of these wares were produced by Vantine, the piece here was made for export by Kyoto potter Kinkozan Sobei VII. It is rare to find such a large piece with a beading still so well adhered to the cream-coloured base”.* Itani, Yoshie. **Noritake’s Sparkling Export Porcelains, Mescouleurs Co. Ltd. Japan. 2017-02-15. Pg. 37.**

The mark is Royal Nishiki Nippon, included below.





The main factors driving this relatively short life span were complexity and costs due to the delicate nature of the bonding of the glass beads to the porcelain bodies.



The finish on this vase is muted as the pastel base colours blend. The vase is classic Art Nouveau. Circa 1915. The mark on the base includes Hand Painted and the pattern number 2/796.

These three vases are included to illustrate the rather dramatic changes in output of the Kinkozan factory over approximately a 20-year period with the artistic quality of the second Art Nouveau inspired vase being questionable and the Art Deco inspired item being best described as “just a vase”.



Of greater importance is the ability to tie the marks with the details of the registration over a period of twenty years spanning 1909 to 1929 with the requirement to comply with the McKinley Act that required the replacement of Nippon with Japan as the country of origin for import into the USA in 1921.

*“The back marking is confirmed as a recent survey revealed that one of them, the ROYAL NISHIKI NIPPON seal, was Kinkozan Sobei VII’s Japanese registration seal (1909 (Meiji 42) Registration No. 36163). At the same time, the stamp (1909 (Meiji 42) Registration No. 36162) was also registered by Sobei VII, which seems to be the back-print for Kyo-satsuma products. Both stamps were approved 30 April 1909 for a Type 13 product line consisting of ceramics, porcelain, earthenware and original bricks”.*



*“ROYAL NISHIKI NIPPON marked products are not as good as Morimura Gumi's Maple Leaf marks and M-NIPPON marked products, but they are one of the more common back markings, and most of the Kinkozan workshop products for this period are for export”. This manufacturing/marketing strategy was continued after 1921 (Taisho 10), “as the ROYAL NISHIKI JAPAN mark has been confirmed”.*



*“Shortly after the death of Sobei VII, the KINKOZAN mark for export (1929 (Showa 4) No. S4-7923) was registered for export by Kinkozan Sobei VIII, which is only found in porcelain products and has an art deco style. Since it was registered in the early Showa era, and Art Deco was popular in the world, its products reflect the tastes of Westerners at that time. Among them, some products that were considered to have been marked for the United States have been confirmed”.*



However, it seems that this mark, from September 1929, was also registered in Showa 4 by Kinkozan Studio for a Class 14 ceramics and porcelain trademark. The Department of Commercial Trading Registration Number 36166 refers.

*“Most of the Kinkozan Studio products for export that were manufactured after the end of the Meiji era were vases. By this time, the firm was still large enough to manufacture cheap and high-quality dinnerware but also not small enough to survive with only traditional crafts. Therefore, in 1935 (Showa 10), it was dissolved by Seiichiro, Kinkozan Sobei VIII, partly due to the impact of the sluggish exports caused by the Great Depression.”* **Kimura, Kazuhiko and Aoi, Kohtaro.**

***Collectors Guide For Old Noritake and Japanese Antique Porcelain with Western Style.***  
**Dragonfly Publishing, Osaka, Japan. (Japanese Edition) 2008. Pgs. 231 & 234.**

This ends a short but comprehensive model of a Japanese porcelain company that actually provides a roadmap of what would be so convenient if it were not, sadly, such a rarity.

**Source: Henley, John G.** “Kinkozan Sobei VII. Purveyor of Kyo-Satsuma, Art Nouveau and Art Deco Porcelains in the Nippon Era”. Academia.edu. June 2019. (Online)



